ATARATIRI

ANNUAL REPORT
TO THE
MINISTRY OF THE
ENVIRONMENT
JULY 1988 - JULY 1989

Daniel Burns,
Commissioner,
City of Toronto
Housing Department

November 16, 1989

Produced for the City of Toronto Housing Department by the
Department of the City Clerk,
Information and Communication Services Divison.

Photography by Peter Goodwin, Department of the City Clerk,
Records and Archives Division;
Jane Weninger, Housing Department.

Printed on unbleached, post-consumer recycled paper. 8938-620

92-05958/

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 3

BACKGROUND
The Need for Housing 4
The ATARATIRI Site 4
Redevelopment Goals 6

THE PROCESS
The Development Process 7
1. Land assembly 7
2. Research and planning 7
3. Site improvement and servicing 8
4. Parcel disposition and development activity 8

The Environmental Planning and Approvals Process 10
1. An Environmental Evaluation Study 10
2. Detailed studies 10
3. The Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments 13

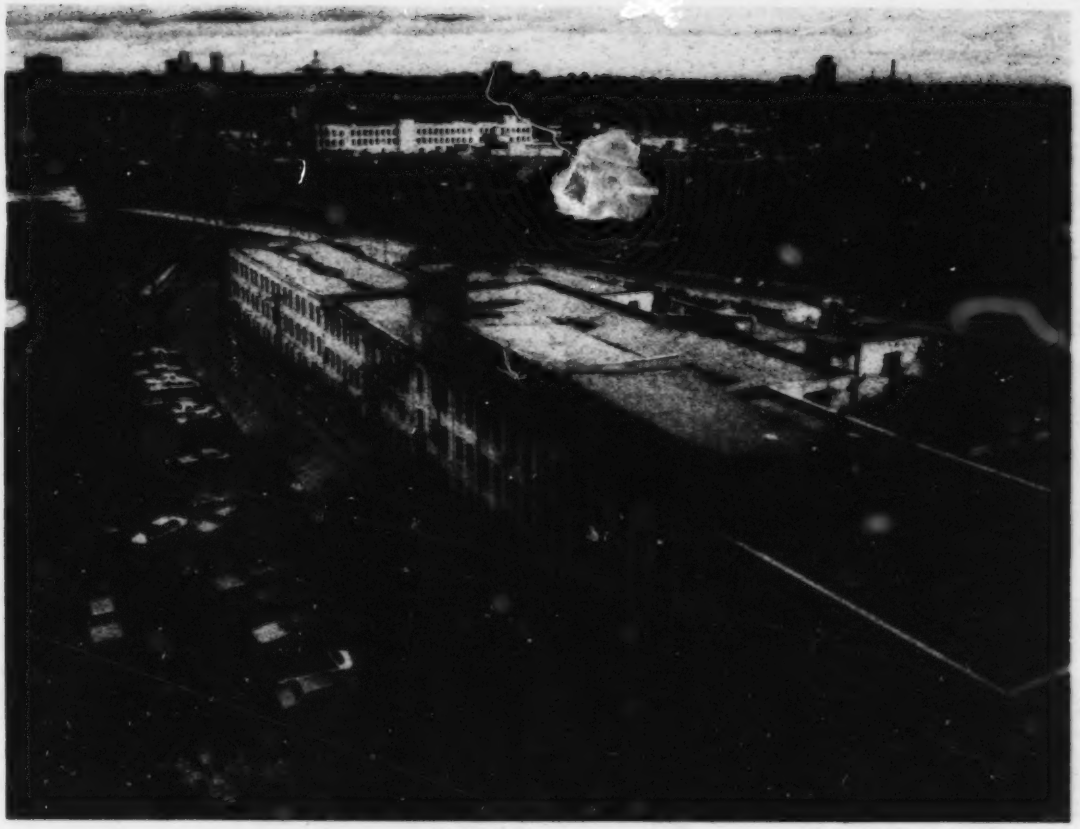
Working Relationships 13

PROGRESS REPORT
Preliminary Studies 14
The Environmental Evaluation Study 14
1. The Soil and Water Management Study 14
2. The Air Quality Study 17
3. The Noise and Vibration Study 17
4. The Transportation and Fixed Facility Risk Study 17
5. The Flood Risk Study 17
6. The Health Risk Study 17

Detailed Studies 18
Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments 20

PUBLIC CONSULTATION
Exemption Order Requirements 21
ATARATIRI Neighbourhood Advisory Council 21
Public Access to Documents 23

SUMMARY 24



The Wickett and Craig tannery building on Cypress Street.

INTRODUCTION

ATARATIRI (formerly referred to as St. Lawrence Square) is a mixed-use development jointly proposed by the City of Toronto and the Province of Ontario. Announced in July 1988, its primary objective is to increase the supply of affordable housing in Toronto.

The new community of ATARATIRI will be a socially and demographically balanced and environmentally sound neighbourhood for at least 12,000 people. The neighbourhood will offer a mix of quality housing, contain a range of services and facilities, and provide a stable base of commercial and environmentally compatible industrial employment opportunities.

The name "ATARATIRI", a Huron word meaning "supported by clay", was chosen to replace the proposed community's former name "St. Lawrence Square" which was causing confusion with the nearby St. Lawrence Neighbourhood.

The Housing Development Agreement between the two levels of government assigns responsibilities and establishes criteria and conditions for this undertaking. The City is acting as the planner and developer, and the Province is guaranteeing the loans necessary to acquire and redevelop the site.

Schedule C of the Housing Development Agreement is the Order exempting ATARATIRI from the Environmental Assessment Act. It establishes the environmental planning, public consultation and review process that will be followed in developing the site. It also provides a framework for ensuring that a satisfactory environmental remediation plan is put into place.

Clause 7 of the Exemption Order requires the City to report annually to the Director of the Environmental Assessment Branch of the Ministry of the Environment. This document is the first annual report covering the period from July 1988 to July 1989. It describes the proposed undertaking, the development process and the environmental planning and approvals process. It also describes progress that has been made towards ensuring a safe and healthy environment for the new community as well as public consultation that has been carried out to July 1989.

BACKGROUND

The Need for Housing

The primary impetus for ATARATIRI was the serious shortage of affordable housing in the Toronto area. Between 1985 and 1988, the average price of a house in the Toronto Real Estate Board (TREB) service area increased from $112,000 to $239,000. In July 1989, the average house price in the TREB service area was $267,000. Consequently, home ownership for low and middle income families is now difficult, if not impossible, to achieve.

During the same period, rental vacancy rates have also remained extremely low. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation data indicate that for 1988 rental housing vacancy rates were 0.2% for the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area and 0.3% for the City of Toronto.

The need to address the housing shortage by providing a large addition to the stock of housing prompted both the City and the Province to consider the possibility of developing some of the City's more extensive, under-used industrial areas. Land between the St. Lawrence neighbourhood and the Don River provided a good opportunity. It is a large site, close to downtown. It also has good access to employment and services and it can take advantage of existing infrastructure.

The ATARATIRI Site

The ATARATIRI redevelopment site is approximately 32 hectares (80 acres). It is bounded by Parliament Street on the west; Front Street, Eastern Avenue, St. Lawrence Street and King Street on the north; Bayview Avenue on the east; and the rail corridor on the south *(Figure 1)*.

The Gooderham and Worts distillery complex that straddles Mill Street between Parliament and Cherry Streets is not part of the land assembly, but is intended for redevelopment by its owners, Allied Lyons of Great Britain.

The properties within the boundaries of the redevelopment site, with the exception of lands owned by CN and CP Rail, were expropriated in July 1988. Efforts to acquire the railway lands by negotiation are ongoing. The Gordon-Young rendering plant at 554 Lakeshore Boulevard, south of the railway corridor, which was identified as an unacceptable source of odours near the new community, was also expropriated and will be relocated or closed down.

ATARATIRI is located in what is today the King-Parliament industrial area but which was once a residential neighbourhood. Irish immigrants moved into the area in the 1830s and many of the original streets and buildings can still be found north of Eastern Avenue.

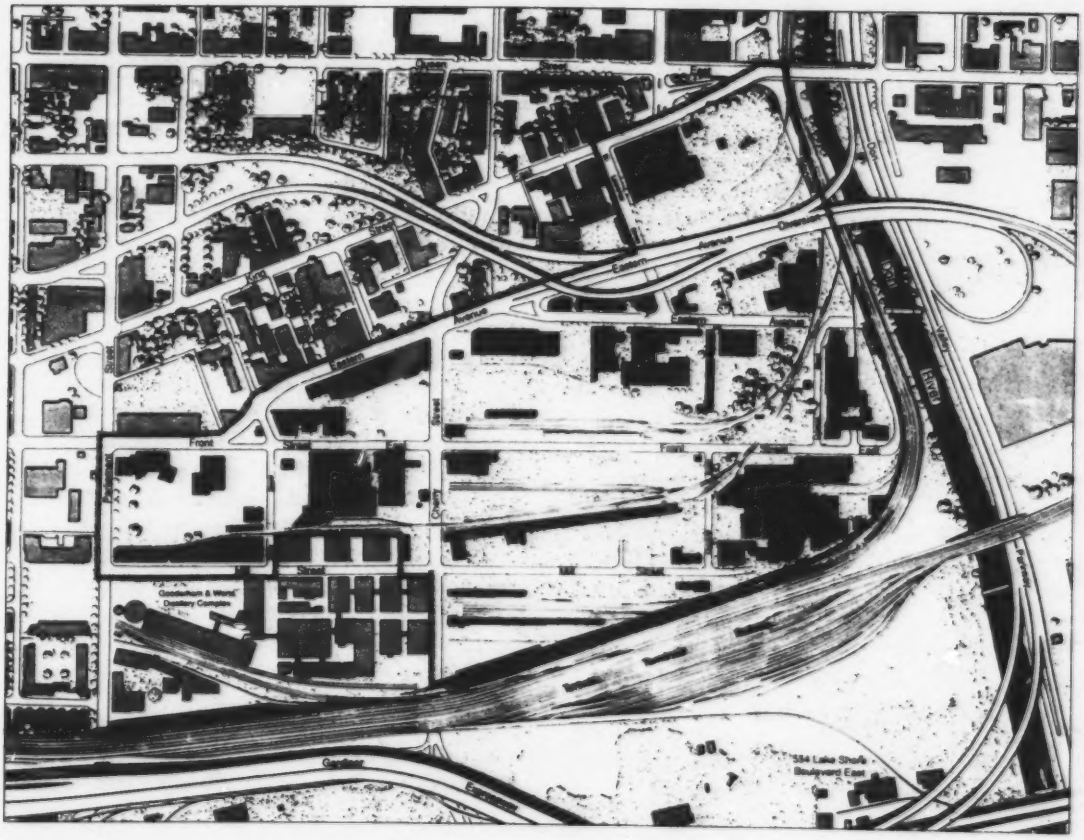


Figure 1 **The ATARATIRI Development Site July 12, 1988**

Legend
Existing Buildings in ATARATIRI ■

Existing Buildings □

In 1856, the Grand Trunk Railway received permission from the City to construct a rail line along what was then the lakeshore to service industry and shipping. By the end of the century, the residential uses had given way almost entirely to industrial. Between 1862 and 1956, a Consumers Gas coal gasification plant operated on the west side of the site on land between Parliament and Trinity Streets.

Today, the site contains a variety of activities including railway yards, warehouses and scrap yards. Because the area has been in industrial use for many years, it will be necessary to restore contaminated soils found on site.

Redevelopment Goals

Both the City and the Province are committed to ensuring that the following redevelopment goals are met. ATARATIRI will be a socially and demographically balanced and environmentally sound community. The neighbourhood will offer a mix of quality housing to include not less than 35% non-profit, 25% "affordable" and not more than 40% at market value. It will contain a full range of services and facilities, including adequate public open space, geared to the present and future needs of its residents. It will also provide a stable base of commercial and industrial employment opportunities for at least 1,500 people. As with the successful St. Lawrence neighbourhood to the west, the development is intended to be self-financing to the maximum extent possible.

Looking northwest from Cypress and Front Streets.

THE PROCESS

The development process for ATARATIRI will consist of the following four stages: land assembly; research and planning; site improvement and servicing; and parcel disposition and development activity. This process, which has already begun, is intended to proceed relatively quickly so that the first residents can be housed by 1992. The full development of the neighbourhood is likely to take between 10 and 15 years but this rate may change depending on market conditions. It could accelerate if the 1996 Olympics are held in Toronto.

1. **Land assembly,** through expropriations and negotiations with Canadian Pacific Railways and Canadian National Real Estate, has been ongoing since the project was announced. Except for those settlements that will be contested in the courts, the financial settlements for land acquisition and business loss should be completed by the end of 1990.

2. **Research and planning** is the major focus until July 1990. The major work being undertaken in this stage is being done through the following workstreams:

   - **Finance and Development** will examine the financial implications of different development scenarios in preparation for obtaining long term financing.

     Market Analysis will analyze residential, commercial and industrial trends.

     Land Use will review planning policies in and around ATARATIRI, prepare planning policies and controls and develop an interim development strategy for the use of existing buildings and lands.

     Urban Design and Physical Planning will identify and propose solutions to urban design and physical planning issues including the layout of roads, blocks and open space.

     Social Structure will set population and housing mix targets for the new community and identify needs groups.

Community Services will identify the types of community services needed and determine a phasing and location strategy.

Environmental will develop an environmental remediation strategy for the entire site.

Floodplain will develop a floodproofing strategy for the site.

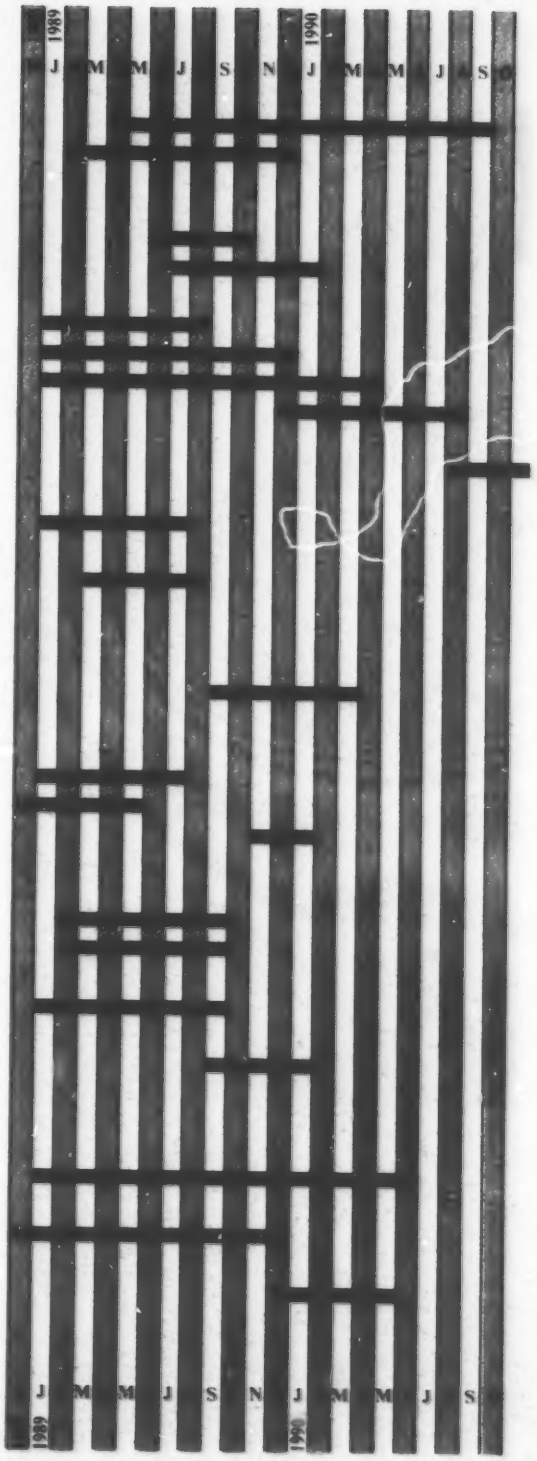
Complementing the research and planning strategy will be a public consultation, education and information program. The research and planning schedule is provided in *Table 1*.

3. **Site improvement and servicing** should begin in mid-1990 and continue through 1991. Remediating contaminated soil and ground water and flood-proofing the site will be top priorities. Providing services, such as new roads and sewers, may take from five to fifteen years, beginning in 1991, depending on market conditions and the types of services required.

4. **Parcel disposition and development activity** will start about 1991. Initially, the rate of development activity is expected to be high. The pace of development may change depending on the availability of government housing program assistance, the state of the private housing market and the ability of the City to negotiate leases and agreements. Development of some social services and amenities will take place early on, with additional facilities phased in as occupancy proceeds. Interim commercial and compatible industrial users will be in place from the onset. They will be replaced, over time, by residential development and permanent commercial and industrial development.

Table 1 ATARATIRI Research and Planning Schedule

Finance and Development	• examine development scenarios • arrange long term financing
Market Analysis	• Analyze commercial/industrial market • analyze private housing market
Land Use	• review policies • interim uses • prepare concept plan • prepare Part II proposals report • prepare Part II final recommendations report
Urban Design and Physical Planning	• survey existing buildings • identify general urban design issues • carry out detailed studies (e.g. open space, blocks and buildings and road configurations)
Infrastructure	• carry out commercial vehicles study • inventory existing infrastructure • develop parking standards
Social Structure	• establish population and housing mix targets • identify target groups
Community Services	• inventory existing services • identify new community service needs
Environmental	• carry out Environmental Evaluation Study (see Table 2)
Floodplain	• carry out Floodplain study • draft Official Plan policies to accompany SPA



Note: Dates may change.

The Exemption Order for ATARATIRI contains 11 terms and conditions which will ensure that ATARATIRI becomes and remains a safe and healthy place to live. These conditions can be grouped into three categories and summarized as follows:

1. **An Environmental Evaluation Study** shall be undertaken to identify environmental, and human health and safety concerns associated with redeveloping the site. The study shall address:
    - air quality;
    - soil quality;
    - ground and storm water quality;
    - noise and vibration conditions; and
    - the risk of both flooding from the Don River and from accidents on road and rail corridors.

It shall also include:

- a soil and ground water management plan;
- a description of any additional, detailed environmental studies needed;
- a description of the environmental planning and approvals process that will be followed; and
- a description of the type of development agreements that will be entered into to ensure that remedial measures are carried out.

The study shall be made available for public review before it is submitted to the Minister of the Environment for approval. Submission to the Minister of the Environment for approval shall occur before the Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments are submitted to the Minister of Municipal Affairs for approval under the Planning Act.

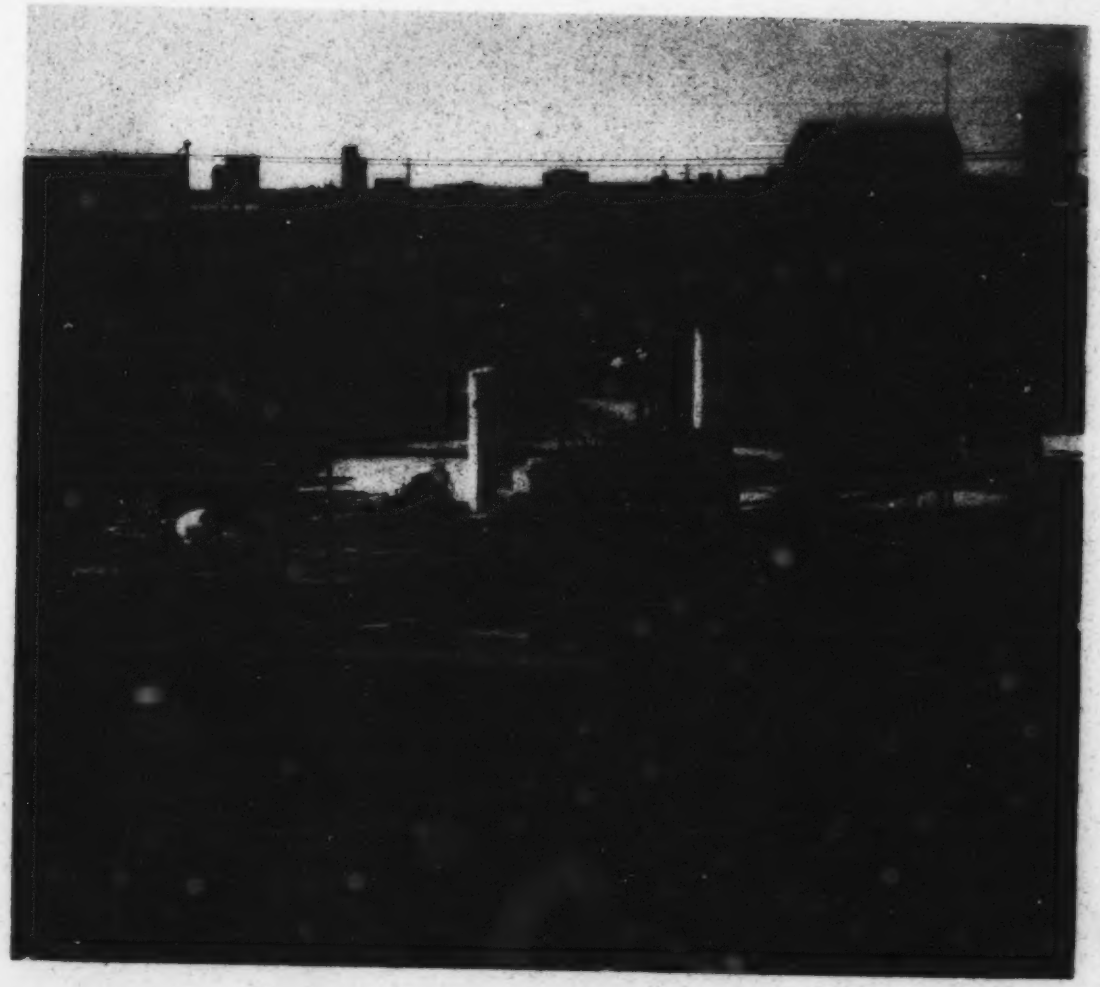
2. **Detailed studies** shall be carried out to address how conditions of contaminated soil and ground water found on each area of the site will be improved, and any other specific environmental problems that require further study.

All detailed environmental studies identified in the approved Environmental Evaluation Study report shall also be carried out and made available for public review prior to its submission to the Ministry of the Environment. The detailed studies are to be submitted to the Director of the Central Region of the Ministry of the Environment for approval prior to approval of zoning By-law amendments.

Environmental consultant

collecting soil samples,

August 1988.



McCord cement operation at King Street and Bayview Avenue.

3. **The Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments** for the area shall include environmental provisions to ensure that the site is redeveloped in an environmentally sound manner. The detailed Part II Plan amending the City's Official Plan shall require that:

   - the environmental planning and approvals process described in the approved Environmental Evaluation Study report be followed;
   - any remedial work and environmental mitigation measures identified in previous studies be carried out;
   - future residents of City-controlled buildings be made aware of any ongoing environmental concerns;
   - the site be subject to a holding by-law until a consulting engineer has certified that environmental provisions have been complied with; and
   - an environmental consultant be retained to ensure that site and building plans and construction activities comply with environmental requirements.

The resulting Part II Plan application will be subject to internal review, public hearings and notice periods as specified in the Planning Act.

Working Relationships

The importance of creating a safe and healthy environment for the future residents of ATARATIRI has been recognized by both the City and the Province. From the outset, extensive staff and budget resources have been dedicated to meeting this goal.

The City of Toronto Housing Department, which has been given the lead role in implementing this development, has hired a full-time staff coordinator to oversee the studies needed to meet the requirements of the Exemption Order and ensure that environmental issues are adequately addressed in the planning process. The City of Toronto Public Health Department's Environmental Protection Office has one half-time Research Consultant position. The person in this position will participate on working committees and review terms of reference, studies and reports.

The Ministry of the Environment has three full-time positions, one in the Environmental Assessment Branch and two in the Central Region office, to ensure that all of the necessary environmental requirements for the project are met in a satisfactory and timely manner. At this time, these three positions are funded by the City of Toronto. During the past six months, Ministry staff have reviewed study terms of reference and advised City staff on environmental matters and the environmental planning process.

PROGRESS REPORT

Preliminary Studies

Immediately following the announcement of ATARATIRI, an investigation of site and structures was undertaken to determine the extent of soil contamination and identify potential environmental concerns associated with buildings and facilities. The results confirmed that some soil at the site contains metal and organic compounds at levels that exceed the Ministry of the Environment's guidelines for residential land use. The occurrence and distribution of these compounds varies vertically and horizontally across the site. The presence of asbestos and other wastes associated with buildings and facilities was also noted.

The results of these investigations, which are now public, have been particularly valuable in identifying where soil and ground water contamination problems exist. They are now being used as a basis for further studies which will more accurately define the nature and extent of soil and ground water contamination and propose comprehensive clean-up strategies.

The Environmental Evaluation Study

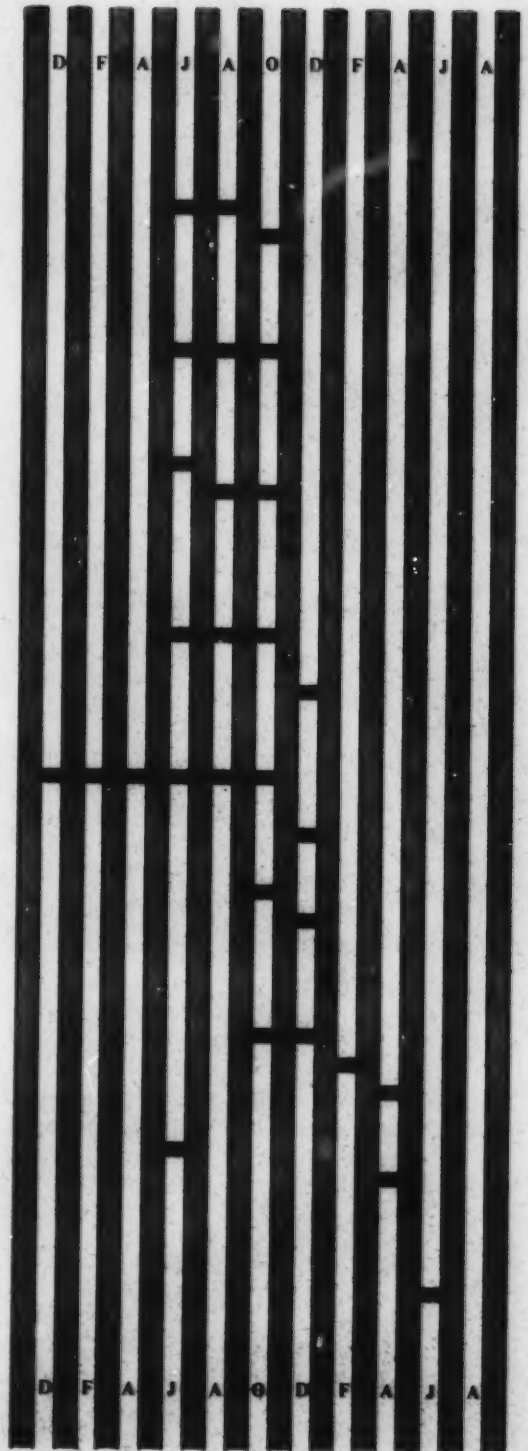
The Environmental Evaluation Study has been the main focus of activity in the environmental workstream during the past six months. The six studies described below are being carried out to meet the requirements of condition 2 in the Exemption Order. They will form the basis for the Environmental Evaluation Study report.

Senes Consultants are coordinating the individual environmental studies, ensuring consistency among the studies and preparing the final report. Terms of reference for the coordinating consultant and the individual environmental studies are part of the public record for ATARATIRI. The Environmental Evaluation Study schedule, provided in *Table 2*, lists dates for preparation and completion of the individual environmental studies and the Environmental Evaluation Study report.

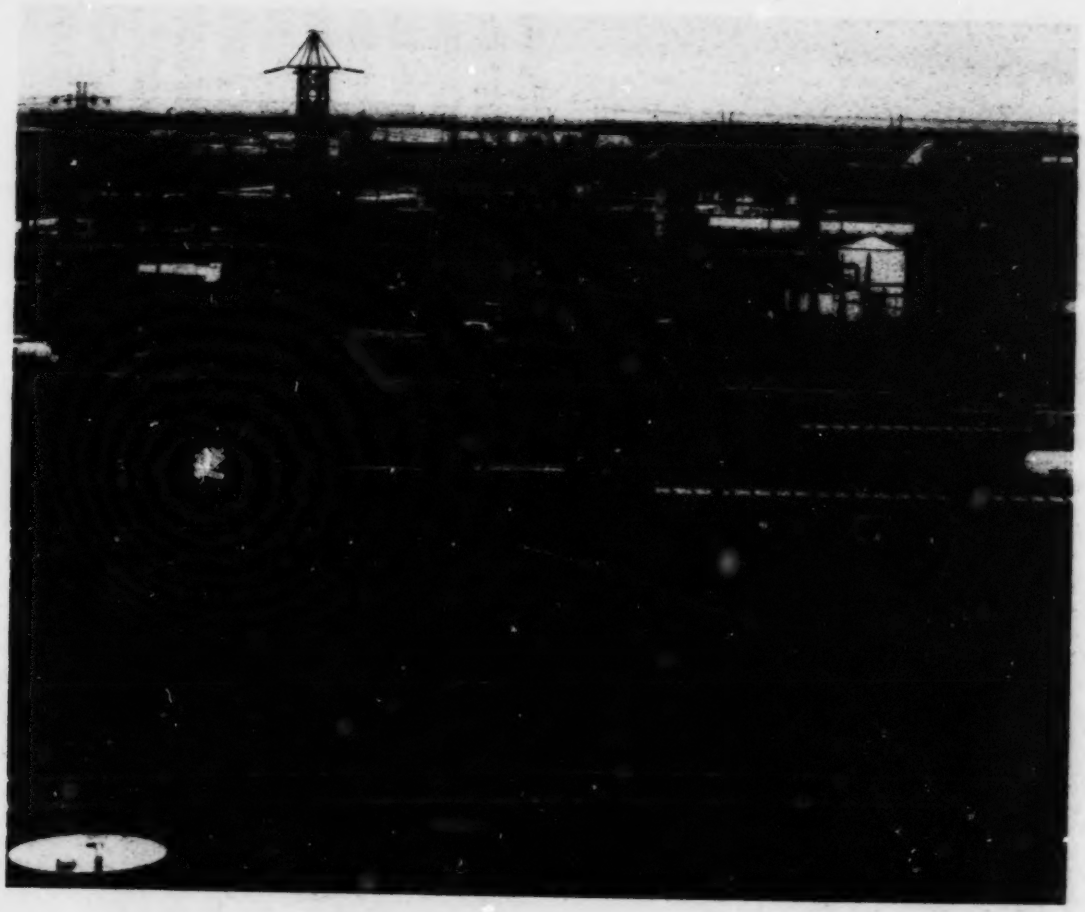
1. **The Soil and Water Management Study** will build on the results of the preliminary environmental investigation of site and structures. The main objective of this study is to produce a soil and water management plan for the proposed development site. The plan will define areas requiring remedial action, identify options and recommend preferred strategies. Soil, ground and storm water sampling, to be undertaken during August 1989, will expand on the existing 1988 data base. The presence or absence of waste from the former coal gasification plant will also be addressed. The firm *Trow, Dames and Moore* is carrying out this study.

Table 2 ATARATIRI Environmental Evaluation Study (EES) Schedule

EES Studies	
Noise and Vibration Study	• proposal call • study underway • review draft • submit final
Air Quality Study	• proposal call • study underway • review draft • submit final
Transportation and Fixed Facility Risk Study	• proposal call • study underway • review draft • submit final
Soil and Water Management Study	• proposal call • study underway • review draft • submit final
Flood Risk Study	• proposal call • study underway • review draft • submit final
Health Risk Assessment	• proposal call • study underway • review draft • submit final
EES Report Preparation and Agency Review	• prepare draft • review draft • revise draft
EES Public Review	• meeting on process • review draft • respond to comments
EES Approval	• submit to Council • submit to MOE



Note: Dates may change.



CN/CP

rail yards in

ATARATIRI.

2. **The Air Quality Study** objectives are to characterize ambient air quality in the vicinity of the site based on existing data; project future changes in air quality; and identify mitigative measures and remedial strategies. The study will deal with a wide range of parameters including odours and dust and, where possible, air toxics. It will also identify sources of emissions that may adversely affect air quality at ATARATIRI and recommend remedial measures. The firm of *Rowan, Williams, Davies, and Irwin Inc. (RWDI)* is preparing this study.

3. **The Noise and Vibration Study** will analyze present noise and vibration conditions across the site. It will project how present conditions are likely to change in the future in order to assess their potential impact on the proposed development and identify ways of ameliorating noise and vibration impacts. *Vibron Limited* is undertaking this study.

4. **The Transportation and Fixed Facility Risk Study** will identify and give a preliminary estimate of the risks to future residents of the new community. Four potential sources of risk exposure are being considered:

   - accidents to pedestrians due to the proximity of road and rail corridors;
   - vehicular accidents due to the site location;
   - accidents involving hazardous materials on existing and potential adjacent transportation systems; and
   - accidents involving hazardous materials at facilities in and around the proposed development site.

   Concord Scientific Corporation is carrying out the transportation and fixed facilities risk analysis.

5. **The Flood Risk Study** is being undertaken to meet requirements outlined in the Exemption Order and as part of the floodproofing studies required to support the City's request to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, to designate the Lower Don Floodplain as a Special Policy Area. Both risk to public safety and risk of damage to property are being considered. *Marshall, Macklin, Monaghan* is carrying out this study.

6. **The Health Risk Study** will be undertaken to assess potential health risks to future residents from the soil and air quality conditions at the site. The study will address health risks both with and without recommended remedial measures in place. Work on this study awaits the results of the soil and water quality and the air quality studies.

In addition to carrying out the studies described earlier, all of the environmental consultants will review site plans and make recommendations on how environmental conditions at the site can be improved through land use planning, siting of buildings and building design, and identify any additional studies required. They will also review site plan proposals, as they are developed to ensure that environmental constraints are taken into account and mitigated to the maximum extent possible in the land use planning process.

The individual environmental studies outlined above will be completed in early 1990. A completed Environmental Evaluation Study report should be available for public review in the spring of 1990. Following public review, the report will be finalized and, together with a summary of public comments and responses thereto, submitted to the Minister of the Environment for approval.

Detailed Studies

Recommendations for detailed studies will flow from the Environmental Evaluation Study report. As a result, work on this phase cannot begin until early 1990. The detailed studies will be carried out to further define the extent of any key concerns and impacts and to identify appropriate remedial options and strategies. For example, detailed soil and ground water management studies will be carried out for each area of the site to determine if, how, and to where, contaminated soil should be removed. All detailed studies will be submitted to the Ministry of the Environment for approval.

View of site

looking north from

Cypress and

Front Streets.

Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments

Preliminary work on the Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments for ATARATIRI is already underway. We have reviewed existing land use controls within the boundaries of the site and in the surrounding King-Parliament and adjacent Central Waterfront planning districts and identified potential land use compatibility problems.

Future work will include reviewing the results of ATARATIRI studies as well as agreements from other developments in the City of Toronto, such as the Railway Lands, to determine:

- appropriate land use policies and controls;
- a strategy for dealing with incompatible off-site land uses; and
- conditions for environmental agreements.

Two City initiatives, which are already underway, will influence the development of environmental planning and approval requirements for ATARATIRI:

1. The lower Don River will be the subject of a separate Official Plan Amendment as part of the Special Policy Area application made by the City of Toronto to the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. The Part II plan for ATARATIRI will reflect the requirements contained in the Official Plan Amendment for the lower Don River Special Policy Area.

2. ATARATIRI lies within the City's Central Area. Planning policies for the Central Area are currently undergoing review. The revised plan, to be completed in 1991, will address a broad range of concerns, including environmental issues. Environmental policies to be developed for ATARATIRI and for the Central Area will need to be consistent.

The development of Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments for ATARATIRI will be a three stage process beginning with a preliminary concept plan which is expected to be discussed at a public meeting and considered by City Council in early 1990.

A Part II proposals report will respond to the public discussion of the preliminary concept plan and make specific Official Plan and Zoning By-law recommendations based on the more detailed planning and environmental studies that are scheduled for the fall and winter of 1989-90. The Part II proposals report should be available for public review in mid-1990.

A Part II final recommendations report will reflect the outcome of this review process and is intended to be submitted to City Council for approval in late 1990. Approval by the Minister of Municipal Affairs would then follow through established procedures under the Planning Act.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Exemption Order Requirements

The Exemption Order lists three requirements for public participation in the environmental planning and review process. These include:

1. Public review of the Environmental Evaluation Study report before it is submitted to the Minister of the Environment for approval;

2. Public review of any detailed environmental studies before they are submitted to the Director of Central Region, Ministry of the Environment; and

3. Public review of the Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments as required by the Planning Act.

The public meeting to review the Environmental Evaluation Study report is scheduled for mid-1990.

ATARATIRI Neighbourhood Advisory Council

One of the first acts of City Council after the announcement of ATARATIRI was to establish a Neighbourhood Advisory Council (NAC) to work closely with City staff and provide input into the ATARATIRI planning process. The NAC is composed of 19 volunteers representing a broad range of interest groups including: housing producers, elected local and regional officials, environmental and community health interests, local businesses, industries and residents, and community service providers.

The council, which meets on the third Tuesday of every month, has six subcommittees:

- Communications;
- Community Services/Social Structure;
- Economic Development;
- Environment/Flood Plain/Risk Analysis;
- Finance/Development; and
- Land Use/Physical Planning.

NAC publishes a quarterly newsletter to inform neighbours and the general public of the progress of ATARATIRI and encourage public participation.

Members of the Neighbourhood Advisory Council.

Three members of the Neighbourhood Advisory Council sit on the Environment/Flood Plain/Risk Analysis subcommittee. They review and monitor all studies dealing with the requirements outlined in the Exemption Order, including flood risk, and provide feedback to staff on environmental, and public health and safety issues as they relate to the proposed development. The subcommittee's main goal is to ensure that ATARATIRI becomes and remains a safe and healthy neighbourhood.

The Neighbourhood Advisory Council has sponsored three public forums on issues relating to ATARATIRI. The first, held on June 1st, discussed the Environmental Evaluation Study process, introduced the environmental consultants and heard public concerns. A transcript of this forum is available at the public access locations listed below. The second forum, held on June 10th, discussed the physical design of the development. The third forum, held on July 25th, gathered community input on the social structure, and the type of living and working environment people hope to see in the new community.

Public Access to Documents

To ensure good public access to ATARATIRI studies and reports, copies will be sent, as they become available, to:

- the Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library (City Hall Branch);
- Ryerson Planning Library (350 Victoria St.);
- the University of Toronto's School of Architecture Library (230 College St.);
- the library of the Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront (207 Queens Quay West); and
- the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Library (171. Front St. East).

In addition, copies of all reports will be on file at the Ministry of the Environment's Environmental Assessment Branch office (250 Davisville Ave., telephone 440-3470, Attention Mr. Randy Hodge) where they will form part of the public record for ATARATIRI.

SUMMARY

ATARATIRI is a major provincial/municipal undertaking that will produce numerous public benefits for the citizens of Toronto. Its primary goal is to increase the supply of affordable housing in Toronto. Both the City and the Province are committed to ensuring that adequate precautions are taken to make the site safe for redevelopment and that development proceeds in an environmentally sound manner. In addition, environmental improvements which are made to the site will have benefits beyond ATARATIRI. ATARATIRI will also act as a model for the redevelopment of other urban industrial areas.

During the past year, substantial progress has been made towards these goals. The next year will see the completion of the various studies, further public consultation and the beginning of environmental remediation.

View of site

looking west along

Front Street.